DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 228 203 SP 022 045

AUTHOR Torres, Cresencio; Katz, Judy H.
TITLE Neuro-Linguistic Programming: Developing Effective Communication in the Classroom.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (63rd, Orlando, FL, February 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Auditory Perception; *Classroom Communication; *Communication Skills; Elementary Secondary Education; Kinesthetic Perception; *Linguistics; Listening Skills; *Neurolinguistics; Receptive Language; *Speech Communication; Student Teacher Relationship; *Teacher Effectiveness; Visual Perception
IDENTIFIERS Neurolinguistic Programming

ABSTRACT

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is a method that teachers can use to increase their communication effectiveness by matching their communication patterns with those of their students. The basic premis[illegible]f NLP is that people operate and make sense of their experience through information received from the world around them. This information is filtered through their sensory systems, producing an internal response which is communicated to others through language. There is a pattern to each person's communication because each has a predominant sense through which he experiences and remembers things. These major input channels are the visual, the auditory, and the kinesthetic senses. People either see (visual) pictures or have images of their experiences, or they hear (auditory) sounds and talk about their experiences, or they experience (kinesthetic) and have feelings about their experiences. By looking at the "predicates" (words made up of verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) students use, teachers can decide which major representational system the student uses to communicate with. The teacher, having done this for himself and the student, can open up lines of communication by speaking in the same mode. NLP is also effective for classroom use because once the teacher has become aware of the predicates used in all patterns he can make an effort to explain in all modes. (JM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED228203

Neuro-Linguistic Programming:
Developing Effective Communication in the Classroom

Cresencio Torres, M.A.

Judy H. Katz, Ed.D.

College of Education

University of Oklahoma

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Cresencio Torres

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

SP 022 045

Neuro-Linguistic Programming: Developing Effective Communication in the Classroom

Abstract

Most teacher preparation programs focus on assisting pre-service teachers in the development of content and subject areas rather than on the process of how to effectively share information in a way which promotes and increases student learning. Consequently, teachers receive little training and have minimal knowledge of how the information they present in the classroom impacts their students.

Neuro-linguistic programming is presented as a mechanism which teachers can use to increase their communication effectiveness by matching their communication patterns with those of their students. This article presents two key dimensions of the NLP model and their application to the classroom and the field of education. The outcome of this process is more effective communication which allows teachers to spend more time teaching and, for students, more time learning.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming:
Developing Effective Communication in the Classroom

> "You should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.
> "I do," Alice hastily replied, "at least I mean what I say
> -- that's the same thing you know."
> "Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "Why you might
> just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same as 'I
> eat what I see!" (3)

Is it in fact the same thing to "mean what we say" and "say what we mean?" How do we know when we are communicating clearly and accurately to others?

Teachers believe that they communicate clearly. Yet, they are often surprised when students do not understand what is being said, or more important, fail to learn. Unfortunately, teachers rarely explore the process of how they disseminate information in the classroom which, when examined closely, may be the source of many learning problems. Teachers need to develop their speaking and writing skills as well as their involvement with new communication technologies. (9)

Most teacher preparation programs focus on assisting pre-service teachers in the development of content and subject areas rather than on the process of how to share information to promote and increase student learning. Furthermore, most methods courses demonstrate ways to design lesson plans, develop tests, and construct bulletin boards, but rarely explore and examine the communication style used by the individual teacher when conveying the information itself. Consequently, teachers have minimal knowledge of how the

information they present in the classroom impacts on their students. This limits their ability to develop communication strategies to match students' communication styles and learning needs.

People vary in their learning styles and the ways in which they interpret information and make sense of the world. (8) People experience the world and learn primarily through the visual, kinesthetic and auditory dimensions. "It is commonly believed that some children are visual learners and some are auditory learners, and that instruction is more effective if it takes advantage of this characteristic or aptitude of a child". (5) Therefore, it is necessary that teachers become aware of their own communication style and the communication styles of their students in order to better facilitate the learning process in the classroom.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) is one mechanism by which teachers can increase their communication effectiveness and explore the basic process of how they share information. NLP serves as an important linkage between teacher and student in that it offers teachers a vehicle by which they can identify and match their own communication patterns with those of their students. The outcome of this process can be the development of rapport and trust which allows teachers to spend more time teaching and, for students, more time learning.

This article will present a definition of Neuro-Linguistic Programming and discuss two dimensions of the model that can be applied for better communication in the classroom. The two dimensions to be explored are representational systems: or language systems which are used to represent and communicate experiences; and predicates or process words which help in the identification of representational systems. Finally, this article will address the application of NLP to the classroom itself and the implications for the field of education.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming: A Definition

NLP is a model of human communication and behavior. The basic premise of NLP is that we operate and make sense of our experiences through information received from the world around us. (2) This information is filtered through our sensory systems providing us with a steady stream of information which we use to organize our experiences. The data we receive are first processed at the unconscious level, experienced internally, and then manifested in external behavior. Our language patterns are one method we use to communicate those internal responses. Therefore, it is through an understanding of language patterns based on information we receive through our senses that we are able to comprehend both our internal and external world. NLP, then, is a model for understanding the basic process used by all people to encode, transfer, guide, and modify behavior. (4)

In order to gain a better understanding of how these processes work, let us next examine the sensory systems we use to experience the world around us.

Representational Systems

We have available to us a number of different ways of representing our experiences. "We have five recognized senses for making contact with the world--we see, we hear, we feel, we taste, and we smell. In addition to these sensory systems, we have a language system which we use to represent our experiences." (6) The NLP model suggests that we store our experiences in these same systems. (7) NLP also believes that all of the distinctions we make concerning our environment, both internal and external, are represented in terms of these sensory representational systems. (4)

Of the five senses we have, only three are widely used by individuals as major input channels--these are the visual, auditory and kinesthetic senses. The remaining two, smell and taste, are little utilized ways of gaining information

about our external world. (2) For example, people who are primarily visual will literally "see" pictures in their heads. For those people who rely on their visual systems, it may be as though they run movies in their heads when remembering or storing information. If people are primarily auditory, i.e., taking information in through sounds, they may actually hear original tones or dialogues in their heads when remembering. For many auditory people, accessing information may be like hearing the replaying of a tape recorder. For those people who are primarily kinesthetic, i.e., responding to whole body internal feelings or tactile sense, they may associate body sensations as a way to recall an experience.

As one way to better understand the three representational systems try this experiment. First, sit back, take a deep breath, and relax in your seat. Then, close your eyes if you wish, and create a visual representation of a blue circle changing to red. Or picture your car. Next, with your eyes closed again, create a kinesthetic representation of heat from an open flame or of baby oil between your finger tips. And, finally, with your eyes closed again, create an auditory representation of crashing waves or the sound of thunder clapping.

Some people may notice that while doing these three exercises they experience seeing vivid colors and images; or have strong feelings of warmth and smoothness; or distinctly hear various subtle or loud sounds. For some, the experiences may be more immediate and detailed. For others, they may experience some or none of the sensations. This differentiation between experiences is precisely what representational systems describe. For those who see clear pictures in the visual exercise, it may mean that their visual representational system is more highly developed than the other systems. The same applies to the kinesthetic and auditory exercises as well. You may want to record which system was easiest for you to experience. This may be your most highly valued representational system. By most highly valued representational

system, we mean the representational system a person typically uses to bring information into consciousness--the one a person typically uses to represent the world and its experiences to him/herself. (2) Once we understand how people experience their worlds, we can then turn to exploring how they communicate about them.

Predicates

Predicates are words used to describe the portion of experience which corresponds to the processes and relationships in that experience. (2) They are words made up of verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Predicates are divided into three categories corresponding to the three major representational systems. People either <u>see</u> (visual) pictures or have images about their experiences; or they <u>hear</u> (auditory) sounds and talk about their experiences; or they experience sensations (kinesthetic) and have <u>feelings</u> about their experiences. (1) When individuals describe their world, for example, using a visual communication channel, they will use such words as "look," "see," "picture," or "perspective." Kinesthetic people will use words like "feel," "hold," "handle," or "grasp." Auditory people will use words such as "hear," "say," "listen," "sound" or "talk."

Individuals have a primary communication channel (more highly developed) which they rely upon during times of stress or when they are problem solving. They have a secondary system which may be used in normal everyday conversation in combination with their primary channel. A tertiary system exists and may be used but it is usually beyond conscious awareness. For example, a person whose primary representational system is kinesthetic and secondary system is visual may be aware of what they "see" and "feel" at any given moment, but not be in "tune" with the sounds and noises around them.

In order to discover which representational system is primary and which communication channel a person favors most, we simply need to listen to the

predicates used in a person's language pattern. The following sentences are written using visual, kinesthetic or auditory predicates.

The student felt emotional support when the teacher grasped her shoulder. (kinesthetic)

The cheerleaders screamed loudly when the winning team was announced. (auditory)

It appeared at a glance that the students looked unclear about the test directions. (visual)

Using NLP In The Classroom

The importance of understanding predicates is essential for effective communication in the classroom. First, teachers must be aware of their own representational systems. Then, in order to identify their students' most valued system, they must pay attention to the predicates being used when students describe their world. By being aware of both systems, teachers can greatly enhance their ability to communicate directly and more effectively and can learn to respond to students by using the student's favored representational system.

For example, if a student is visual, i.e., uses a visual representational system to communicate experiences, and the teacher is auditory, i.e., uses an auditory representational system to communicate experiences, the student may have a more difficult time trying to understand and comprehend what the teacher is saying. The student and teacher will, literally, be speaking two different languages. In fact, many students' "so called" resistance to learning may stem from problems associated with not understanding how the teacher communicates.

The following illustrates how matching or mismatching predicates in conversation can either enhance or frustrate communication between teacher and student. First, we will examine the outcome of mismatched predicates.

Mismatched Predicates

Student (visual): "I just can't see myself doing any better in your class, Mrs. Smith."

Teacher (kinesthetic): "Well John, how do you feel about not being able to do better?"

Student (visual): "I don't have a clear picture about what you're asking."

Teacher (kinesthetic): "How do you feel about not being able to get a handle on things in class?"

Student (visual): "I can't see what you're trying to say. It's really hazy to me."

In this example, the student and teacher are having trouble understanding one another. The student is using visual predicates while the teacher is responding with kinesthetic predicates. It is apparent that the teacher did not pay attention to the different representational system used by the student. The student "sees" the teacher as an adult who doesn't understand his world. On the other hand, the teacher may "feel" that John is having a hard time learning and may feel frustrated in her attempts to get through to him. The outcome of this conversation is that neither teacher nor student profit from the interaction.

Teachers who are unaware of their own language patterns may utilize their favored representational system in the classroom not taking into account that some student may hear, see, or experience the learning differently. Some teachers believe that only a few students are able to "really" understand what is being taught to them in the classroom. Yet, they may not realize that those students identified as "the better students" may be the ones who share the teacher's favored representational system. An auditory teacher, for example, speaking to students who are primarily visual or kinesthetic may experience a

myriad of communication problems with them. They may require extra time for clarification of assignments or repeatedly do work contrary to directions given by the teacher. Teaching content information becomes more difficult because those visual and kinesthetic students cannot picture or feel what the auditory teacher is saying. The outcome of these interactions may be that students eventually get bored and act out in unproductive ways. A classroom situation with these dynamics may create discipline as well as motivational problems which have a negative impact on the teacher-student relationship.

The following example illustrates how matched predicates create a very different form of interaction between student and teacher.

Matched Predicates

Student (visual): "I just can't see myself doing any better in your class, Mrs. Smith."

Teacher (visual): "Well John, I noticed recently that you looked confused when I was giving out the homework assignments."

Student (visual): "I have an idea and I'm clear about what you expect, but I just can't focus on my homework."

Teacher (visual): "I see. Let's examine some different ideas and see if we can come up with a plan that will better enable you to focus on your work."

In this example, both the student and teacher are using the same visual representational system. They are actually "seeing" the world from the same "perspective" using matched (visual) predicates. Their communication is open giving both teacher and student a sense of trust and understanding. They have succeeded in accomplishing clear and direct communication.

Teachers aware of how to identify representational systems, their corresponding communication channels, and matching predicates will be better

prepared to teach and relate to their students. By being aware that students feel, see, and hear their worlds differently, teachers may develop greater flexibility in using all three representational systems. This strategy will serve to assure that students will process information through a sensory system which they understand--their own. When working on a one-to-one basis, the teacher who is aware of a student's favored representation system can match that system and insure more direct and precise communication.

In addition, teachers aware of the different representational systems can teach their students to expand the uses of each of the other systems. For example, a student who is primarily kinesthetic can, with instruction from the teacher, learn to access information through the visual and auditory systems as well. This will serve to increase the student's ability to learn in different modalities and, in years ahead, to learn from various teachers who may have different representational systems and communication channels.

Teachers aware of the interplay between representational systems and learning style can incorporate their knowledge into various techniques used for teaching in the classroom. The process of communicating information and content can then be designed, taking into account the representational systems and communication channels of all students. This process can be utilized when designing lesson plans in all content areas and at all grade levels.

Thus, the two most important dimensions for applying NLP in the classroom are:

1) targeting instruction to the student's favored representational system; and,

2) congruency between the methods of teaching and the specific ways content is shared.

Conclusion

What this article has presented is two critical needs in education today. First, the need to explore the communication process in the classroom. Second, the application of two dimensions of Neuro-Linguistic Programming for effecting better communication between teacher and student. There are other aspects of the communication process and specifically NLP for educators to consider. However, that is beyond the scope of this article to address.

We must recognize that it is the classroom experience that a student shares with a teacher that establishes a foundation for the student's willingness to engage or not in the educational process. Without a thorough awareness of how this dynamic functions, teachers miss an important element in the gestalt of teaching. It is time we moved beyond what is being taught in school to how we teach and, more important, how we communicate and share information with our students.

References

1. Alexander, D.; Alexander, N.; and Bailey, R. Advanced Communication Technology Training (ACT training workbook), Grand Prairie, Texas: Brandon and Associates, 1980.
2. Bandler, R. and Grinder, J. The Structure of Magic I. Palo Alto, California: Science and Behavior, 1976.
3. Carroll, L. Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There. New York: Macmillan, 1872.
4. Dilts, R. and Meyers-Anderson, M. Neuro-Linguistic Programming^{tm} in Education. Santa Cruz, California: Not Ltd. Division of Training and Research (D.O.T.A.R.), 1980.
5. Glaser, R. "Adapting to Individual Differences." In F. Schultz (Ed.). Annual Editions: Education 82/83. Guilford, Connecticut: Dushkin Publishing, 1982, 191.
6. Grinder, J. and Bandler, R. The Structure of Magic II. Palo Alto, California: Science and Behavior, 1976, p.6.
7. Harman, R. and O'Neill, C. "Neuro-Linguistic Programming for Counselors." Personnel and Guidance Journal, 59:7, April 1981, pp. 449-453.
8. National Association of Secondary School Principals (Eds.). Student Learning Styles. Reston, Virginia: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1979.
9. Robinson, S. "Teacher Education and the Application of Standards." NEA position paper delivered at national conference, November 30-December 2, 1979.